

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8791

S E C R E T GUATEMALA 6086

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: X-GDS-3

TAGS: PBOR, GT, BH, UK

SUBJECT: BELIZE

1. I AM DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT OVERWHELMING PASSAGE OF BRITISH RESOLUTION ON BELIZE AT THE UNGA WILL GREATLY INCREASE THE ODDS OF A GUATEMALAN MILITARY MOVE INTO BELIZE. THE RESOLUTION -- IN WHICH THE UK HAS SAID NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES CAN BE MADE -- ALTERS THE NEGOTIATING GROUND RULES AND REQUIRES THAT ANY AGREEMENTS THAT MAY EMERGE FROM FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GUATEMALA MUST BE IN ACCORD WITH THE INDEPENDENCE, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF BELIZE. THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT, THE MILITARY COMMAND AND THE INFORMED PUBLIC, WILL REGARD PASSAGE OF THIS RESOLUTION AS A HUMILIATING NATIONAL DEFEAT.

2. MODERATE GUATEMALANS, NO LONGER ABLE TO POINT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING ANYTHING THROUGH NEGOTIATION, WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RESTRAIN THOSE WHO URGE A MILITARY SOLUTION. IN THE LIGHT OF THE OBJECTIVES TO BE SOUGHT, EVEN AN INCREASE IN THE SIZE AND CHANGES IN THE DISPOSITION OF THE OPPOSING BRITISH FORCES MAY NOT BE A SUFFICIENT DETERRENT. THE GOG WILL HOPE THAT A MILITARY MOVE INTO BELIZE WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY AN EARLY CEASEFIRE WHICH WOULD LEAVE ITS FORCES IN POSSESSION OF AT LEAST A SMALL AMOUNT OF BELIZEAN TERRITORY AND THEREFORE IN A STRONGER BARGAINING POSITION TO PROTECT WHAT GOG CONSIDERS ITS LEGITIMATE SECURITY AND ECONOMIC

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INTERESTS.

3. THE GOG CLEARLY UNDERSTANDS OUR OPPOSITION TO THE USE OF FORCE. BUT IN THE EMOTIONAL ATMOSPHERE OF FRUSTRATION AND HUMILIATION THAT CAN BE FORESEEN, WE AS WELL AS THE BRITISH SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THE US WILL BE UNABLE TO RESTRAIN GUATEMALA ONCE THE GOG DECIDES TO MOVE, A FACT THAT MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY CLEAR TO THE UK.

4. HOW DO WE DEFUSE THE SITUATION AND SET THE BASIS FOR SOLUTION OF THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM? ONLY, IT SEEMS TO US, BY PERSUADING THE BRITISH OF THE SERIOUS POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT AND OF THE NECESSITY OF A CONCILIATORY EFFORT IN THE BRIEF TIME BEFORE THE RESOLUTION COMES TO A VOTE. WITHIN THE SPIRIT AND THE LETTER OF THE UK RESOLUTION, I BELIEVE THERE ARE STILL COURSES OF ACTION OPEN TO HMG WHICH HAVE SOME CHANCE OF MAKING NEGOTIATION MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THE GOG THAN THE USE OF FORCE. THE UK COULD RECONSIDER ITS REFUSAL TO SUBMIT THE BELIZE DISPUTE TO THE ICJ. IT COULD COMMIT ITSELF NOW TO SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS LATER ON SECURITY AND ECONOMIC ISSUES INVOLVING BELIZE WHICH ARE OF CONCERN TO GUATEMALA. SOME FORMULA OFFERING GUATEMALA A WAY OUT IS REQUIRED IF CONFLICT IS TO BE AVOIDED. AN EMBASSY MESSAGE DISCUSSING THESE ALTERNATIVES IN GREATER DETAIL FOLLOWS.
MELOY

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